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NEAC #3271-78

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

SP - 233/78  
2 August 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence *SW*  
VIA: Director, National Foreign Assessment Center *NSC*  
FROM: National Intelligence Officer for Strategic Programs  
SUBJECT: PRC Meeting 3 August 1978 on PRM/NSC-32, Civil Defense

1. Action Requested: That you note the background, issues and recommendations below in preparation for your participation in the PRC meeting on PRM-32, Civil Defense. (Key findings in the Summary of the PRM/NSC-32 report attached, have been highlighted for your review.)

2. Background:

a. The extended debate on civil defense generated by PRM-32 is lurching toward resolution. Substantial disagreement remains over what US policy is to be desired.

--The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Federal Preparedness Agency argue for a policy of essential equivalence between US and USSR in programs for urban evacuation, government continuity and industrial protection.

--OSD, joined at times by State, argues for a less extensive policy of enhancing continuity of government and improving capabilities for urban evacuation.

--ACDA appears to argue for a policy of no change from current funding levels but with greater emphasis on urban evacuation.

b. There is even greater disagreement about the rationale on which US civil defense policy should be based. The Intelligence Community's estimate has been used to justify both increases and decreases in the present US civil defense program. There is, however, no logical connection between our findings on the Soviet program and broader issues of how civil defense fits into US strategic policy.

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--Some members, including the JCS and part of the NSC staff, believe that the Soviet civil defense program will increase the willingness of the Soviet Union to risk a nuclear exchange.

--Others, including State and ACDA, maintain that despite civil defense the level of damage would be so great that neither side would have reason to hope for a satisfactory outcome of a nuclear exchange.

--OSD, including both PA&E and ISA, maintain that buying civil defense is like buying insurance--a modest program can be a low-cost hedge against even greater devastation.

--CIA stands by the Intelligence Community estimate of last December that the Soviet Union's program, while large compared to ours, is not such as to embolden them to run an increased risk of nuclear war.

c. [REDACTED] has run the working group sessions briskly--most of the real work has gone on out of sight inside or between contending agencies with the NSC adopting a few paragraphs or pages of text to placate this or that faction. The Summary is his effort. It has not been cleared with other agencies.

d. The intelligence judgments on Soviet civil defense programs were drawn from the IIM with some exceptions:

--The Soviet fatality estimates are higher than in the IIM, but they are not unreasonable given the differing forces and assumptions used, e.g., US forces were assumed to be on alert.

--The study does not address the issue of how the Soviets would react to an increase in the US civil defense program. The reason for this is that we have not done any useful analysis of the issue, and opinions vary widely.

### 3. Issues and Recommendations:

a. The principal issue will be the choice among alternative US policies to recommend to the President. The probable consensus of other agencies with a policy interest is likely to be for a US program somewhat larger than the present one with special focus on planning for urban evacuation and enhanced government continuity. Recommendation: That you take no position on this issue.

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1. A set of talking points has been added at front of book.
2. Questions you raised are noted with paper clips.
  - a. Your first question is addressed in Talking Point #3.
  - b. The other two questions are answered on facing pages.



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PRC Meeting on PRM/NSC-32, Civil Defense

Talking Points for the DCI

1. Avoid discussing US civil defense policy in terms of Soviet civil defense programs.
  - Could be led into "survivability gap" mode of reasoning.
  - An assessment of the Soviet program could be used to "justify" some US programs.
  - Fatality estimates (made in the IIM and in other analyses) are flexible. Should probe assumptions not focus on numbers.
2. Two views among agencies about Soviet reactions to US civil defense program: (1) Soviets would not react because they tend not to be concerned about programs which do not threaten the USSR. (2) Soviets would regard increased US civil defense as a hard line position of the Administration.
3. The Soviets believe the US would initiate the use of nuclear weapons: A massive US surprise attack is not ruled out, but is considered unlikely. The most likely beginning would be escalation to the inter-continental level of a large scale conventional theater conflict in which NATO initiated theater nuclear operations. Soviet belief that the US would strike first is not consistent with US strategy of deterrence, retaliation and assured destruction. Soviet belief is consistent with
  - NATO exercises which play the use of tactical nuclear weapons when conventional defenses fail.
  - Explicit NATO and US policy which allows for first use of nuclear weapons.
  - Soviet belief that the West will "lash out" in one last effort before defeat.
4. Adequacy of the PRM/NSC-32 report. ACDA: Report should be redone. State: With changes the report is adequate. NSC and JCS: Report is adequate. OSD: Position is not known. DCI: Intelligence positions of the report are adequate.

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b. The issue of the size and import of the Soviet civil defense effort and its relationship to the alternative policies under review will probably be raised. Recommendation: That you maintain that there is no inevitable linkage between Soviet civil defense programs and US civil defense policy.

c. The question of Soviet reaction to an increased US civil defense program may be raised. Recommendation: That you point out that this issue has not been analyzed sufficiently to enable us to draw firm conclusions.

d. The issue of whether this draft is an adequate basis on which to formulate any US civil defense policy will be raised. Recommendation: That you acknowledge the paper's obvious deficiencies but realizing that further study is not likely to overcome the major analytic flaws, that you support the paper as an adequate basis for recommending policy.

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Attachment

*This is naturally linked to ? of whether Sovs think we are preparing for a 1st strike. Do we think they do think that? Do we think it reasonable to believe they could think that?*

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